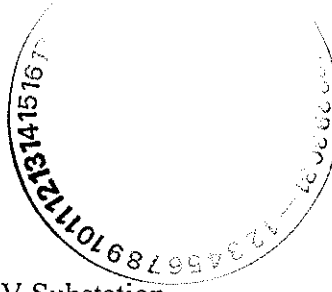




Office of  
**PLANNING AND ZONING**

WRIGHT COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
10 Second Street NW, Rm 140, Buffalo, MN 55313-1185  
(763) 682-7338  
Fax # (763) 682-7872

Mr. William Cole Storm  
MN Environmental Quality Board  
300 Centennial Office Building  
658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155



RE: Wright Hennepin Coop 115/12.5 KV Substation

Dear Mr. Storm:

Enclosed is a copy of the EA prepared for the Lake Constance Substation in Buffalo Township of Wright County. A notice for the monitor is also enclosed. If there are any questions, please call me at (763) 682-7331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Davis".

Charles Davis  
Environmental Health Officer



# **Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Lake Constance 115 kV Substation Wright County, Minnesota**

**Wright County Planning and Zoning**

***February 2005***

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## **1.0 Summary**

Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (W-H) is planning to construct and own a new 115/12.5 kV substation near the City of Buffalo, Wright County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, therefore no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The new facility will meet the growing electrical demand and improve the service and reliability of electric facilities in the area.

## **2.0 Proposed Facilities**

### **2.1 Project Need**

Due to increased loading over recent years, models show that customers in the northeast Buffalo area normally fed from Mary Lake Substation (located South of proposed Lake Constance Substation site) will experience low voltages during normal peak conditions (less than 114 volts). Under contingency situations, models also show unacceptable voltage levels to residential and commercial customers in the surrounding area without this improvement.

The proposed Lake Constance project will provide a significant reliability enhancement and will meet the increased electrical demands resulting from growth in the residential and commercial sectors in the Buffalo area. This system improvement is identified in W-H's 2002-2011 Long Range Construction Work Plan.

### **2.2 Proposed Location**

The new substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W, on a one-acre site on the west side of Dalton Avenue NE, ¼ mile south of County Road 113 just northeast of the City of Buffalo, Buffalo Township, Wright County (Figure 2).

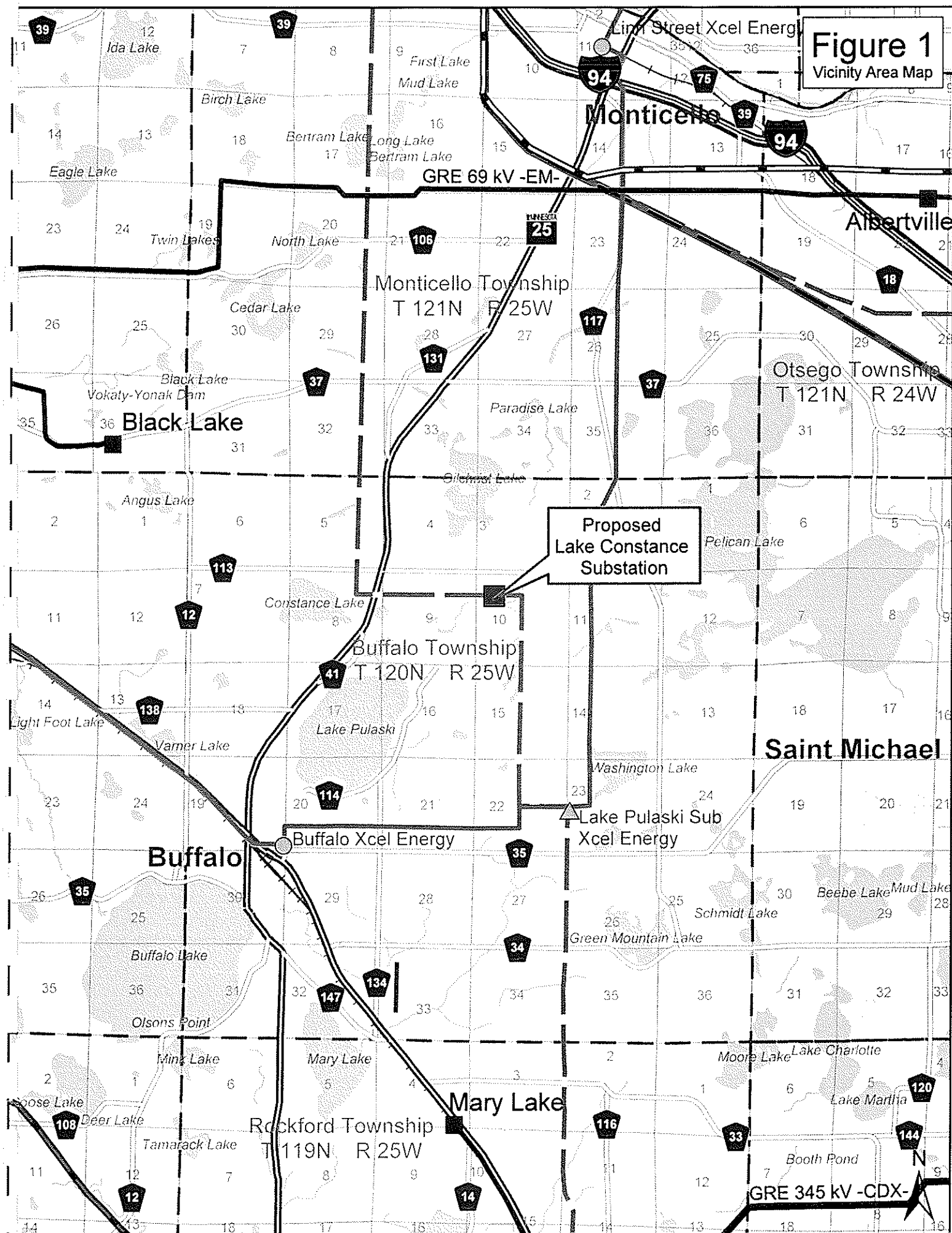
### **2.3 Ownership**

The substation site will be owned by W-H and all distribution facilities will be constructed, operated and maintained by W-H.

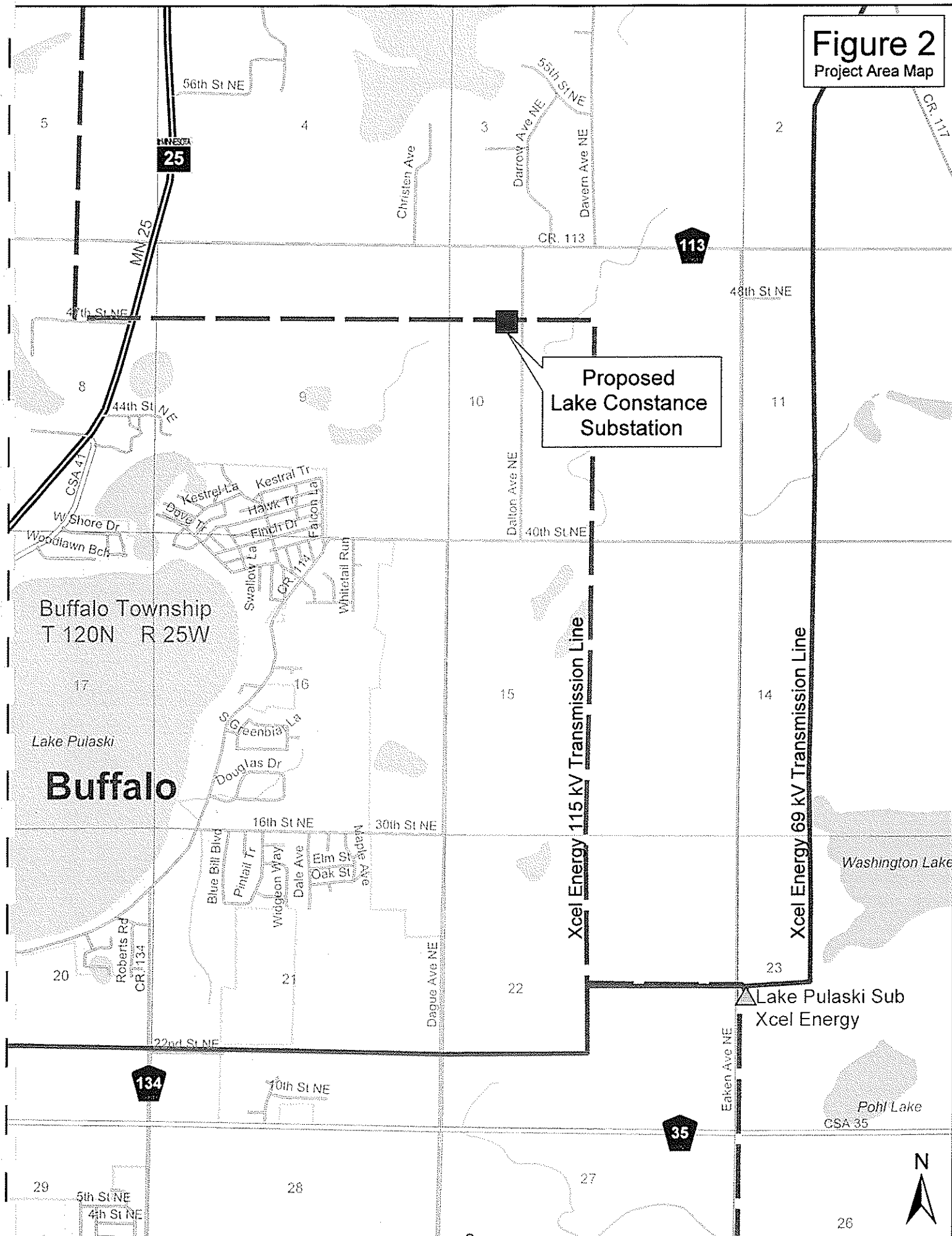
### **2.4 Substation Design**

The substation will be enclosed in a fenced area situated inside the one-acre parcel. A 7-foot high chain link fence (with an additional one foot of barbed wire around the top) will be installed. The fence will be designed to deter animals. A typical distribution substation is shown on the fact sheet in Appendix A. Electric facilities in the substation include a 115/12.5 kV distribution transformer (Figure 3).

**Figure 1**  
Vicinity Area Map



**Figure 2**  
Project Area Map



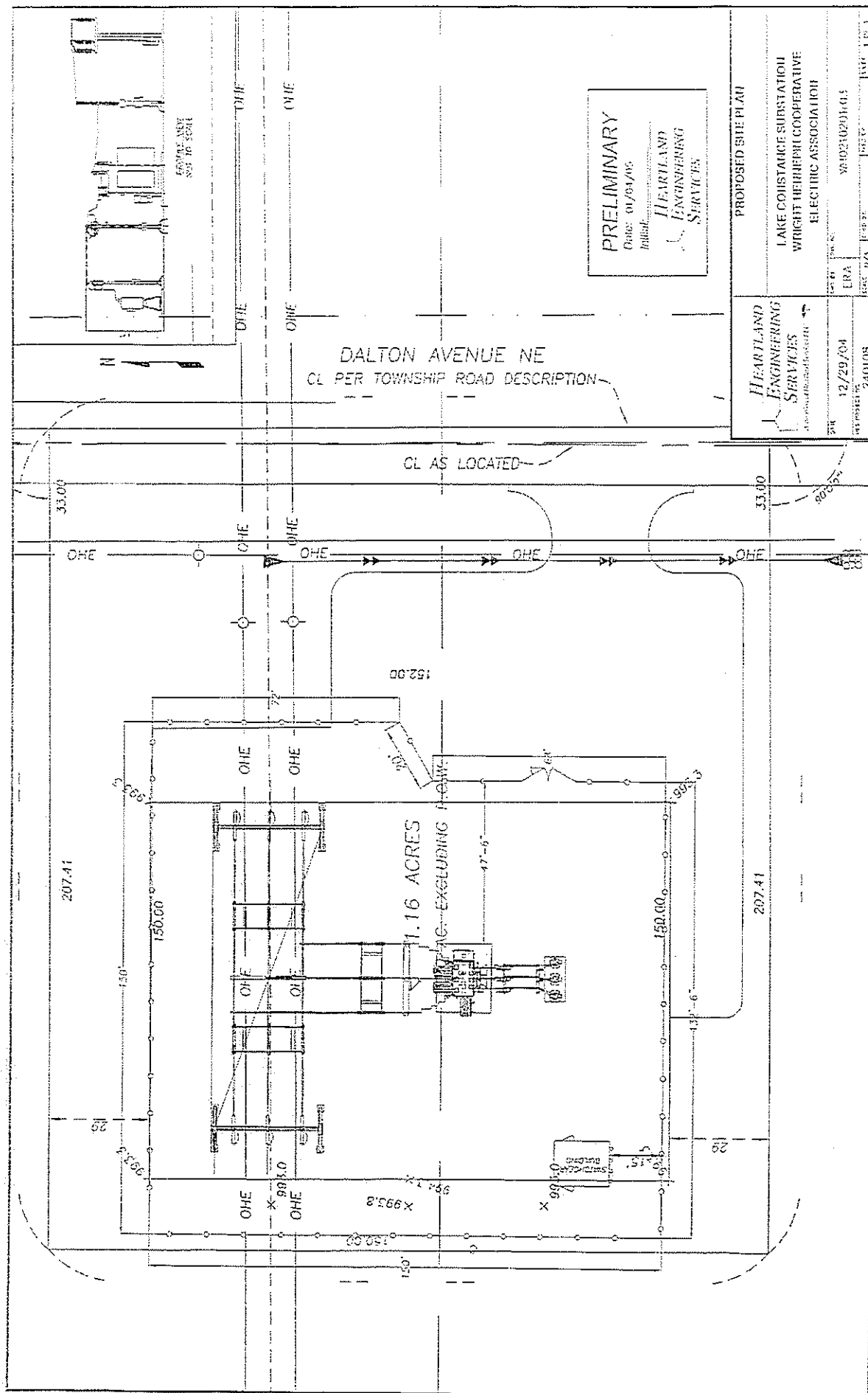


Figure 3. Substation Site Plan

Some equipment within the substation is filled with mineral oil for cooling. This equipment will be sitting on concrete pads with three (3) inches of crushed rock covering the entire fenced-in area in the event of an equipment leak. Substation sites are visited on a monthly basis to check for leaks.

## **2.5 Transmission Facilities**

The existing 115 kV transmission line owned and operated by Xcel Energy will enter the substation on one side and exit the other. The in-and-out design will require new wood poles on either side of the substation. The new poles will be in the general location of the existing poles.

## **2.6 Cost Estimate**

The estimated cost for the substation facilities is \$750,000 including all site preparation and equipment.

## **3.0 Environmental Analysis**

### **3.1 Natural Environment**

The effects of the project on the natural environment, including air, water, vegetation and wildlife have been considered. Responses received from state and federal agencies that reviewed the project are provided in Appendix A.

#### **Air Quality**

Because electric substations and transmission lines do not affect air quality, there will be no long-term environmental impacts on the air. Temporary air quality impacts would be expected to occur during the construction phase of the project. However, adverse impacts to the surrounding environment will be minimal because of the short and intermittent nature of the emission and dust-producing construction phase.

#### **Water Resources**

No impacts to water resources are anticipated. The substation does not displace any existing wetlands and will not have any impact on groundwater or other surface waters. The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) was contacted regarding this project and in a letter of February 16, 2005, the Corps indicated that the location is not within their regulatory jurisdiction and a permit is not required. There are no Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Public Waters in the vicinity of the project, and the DNR had no comments on the project (e-mail of January 19, 2005).



## **Vegetation and Wildlife**

The DNR and the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) were contacted regarding vegetation and wildlife resources in the vicinity of the project. There are no Centers of Highly Sensitive Areas in the project vicinity. The DNR had no comments on the project (e-mail of January 19, 2005). The FWS indicated that there are no federally listed species documented in the project area (e-mail of December 17, 2004).

Effects on area wildlife will be minimal. The substation is designed to deter animal entry.

### **3.2 Human Settlement**

The proposed substation project is located in an area zoned agriculture and the land is currently used for agriculture. Impacts on human settlement will be very minimal, as the substation is approximately 500 feet from the closest residence. The new substation will not cause the displacement of any residence or recreational area and will not affect any public services.

### **3.3 Noise**

The proposed substation will be designed and constructed to comply with State of Minnesota noise standards. It has been determined that there will be negligible noise at the property boundaries. The substation transformer will be designed in accordance with ANSI standards.

### **3.4 Aesthetics**

The new substation will have minimal impact on aesthetics of the area, as it is located directly beneath an existing transmission line.

### **3.5 Soils and Geology**

The proposed site will require some grading. Minimal erosion may occur at the site during construction, but these short-term impacts can be minimized through the use of Best Management Practices.

### **3.6 Archaeological and Historic Resources**

The Minnesota Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted about the presence of archaeological, historical or architectural resources located on or near the site. In a letter dated January 10, 2005, SHPO indicated that no historic properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by this project.

### 3.7 Transportation

The site will not affect any public right of ways. Access to the site will use existing roadways. No roadway improvements will be needed for equipment delivery. In an e-mail dated February 16, 2005, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics indicated that the proposed substation will not have adverse effects on the Buffalo Municipal Airport.

### 3.8 Public Health and Safety

No threats to public health and safety are anticipated for this project. All facilities will be constructed in accordance with the National Electric Safety Code and other industry standards. Construction personnel will be required to follow OSHA regulations. Other safety measures such as warning signs, fencing, and gates will be utilized as needed.

## 4.0 Permits, Approvals and Public Comments

### 4.1 Overview of the Minnesota Approval Process

This project falls under the State of Minnesota's Power Plant Siting Act, (Minnesota Statutes § 116C.51-.69 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400) for transmission projects over 100 kV and requires a permit from the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB). However, for eligible projects, a utility may apply to the local unit of government that has jurisdiction over the project for approval instead of applying to the EQB (Minn. Rules pt. 4400.5000). This proposed 115 kV substation project is eligible for local review.

Wright County has agreed to act as the lead local unit of government with jurisdiction to approve the project. Wright County was afforded the opportunity to relinquish its jurisdiction by requesting that EQB assume jurisdiction, but has elected to maintain jurisdiction of the project. As required by the EQB, a project notice was sent to those persons on the EQB Power Plant Siting General Notification list (see Appendix B).

In accordance with EQB rules, an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by the local unit of government with jurisdiction over the project must be completed. Specific requirements include an opportunity for public participation in developing the scope of the EA before it is prepared, published notice in the EQB Monitor when the EA is available for review, and the procedure for commenting on the EA. Final decision on the project will not be made until at least ten days after the notice appears in the EQB Monitor.

#### 4.2 EA Public Involvement

The Wright County Planning & Zoning Office sent out a Public Comment Notice on February 4, 2005 to obtain input from the public on the scope of the EA for the project (see Appendix B). No comments were received from the public regarding the scope of the EA.

#### 4.3 Local Permitting

Wright County requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for this project. The Wright County Planning & Zoning Office sent out a Notice of Public Hearing on February 4, 2005 for the Wright County Planning Commission Conditional Use Permit Hearing on this project to be held on February 17, 2005. A copy of the notice is included in Appendix B. The Planning & Zoning Commission will vote on the CUP application after notice of the EA has been published in the EQB Monitor and the comment period requirements have been met.

#### 4.4 Other Permits and Approvals

Government Unit	Type of Approval	Regulated Activity	Status
USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS)	Environmental Review	Construction of 115/12.5 kV substation	Approval in process
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	Environmental Review	Wetland conservation and impact on unique, prime or statewide important farmland	The NRCS did not respond to the project review request.
US Dept. of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service	Threatened and Endangered Species Review	Review of records for federally threatened or endangered species that may exist at or near the substation site	No federally listed species in the project area – e-mail dated December 17, 2004
US Dept. of the Army Corps of Engineers	Wetland and Waterways Review	Review navigable water and the dredging or filling of US waters including wetlands	No permit needed - letter of February 16, 2005
MN Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Environmental Review – Wetlands, Water, Threatened and Endangered Species	Comprehensive review of substation site impacts	No comments on the project – e-mail of January 19, 2005
Minnesota Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division	Airspace Concerns	Public and private airports/airstrips	Proposed substation will not have adverse effects on the Buffalo Municipal Airport – e-mail dated 2/16/05
MN Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	SHPO Review of Nationally Registered Historic Places	Historic preservation	No historic properties will be affected by the project – letter of January 10, 2005
Wright County	Conditional Use Permit	Construction of electric facilities	Application in process

RGU- Charles Davis Wright County Environmental Health  
office

# **APPENDIX A**

## **AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

St. Paul District Corps of Engineers  
190 Fifth Street East  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1683

FEB 16 2005

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF  
Operations  
Regulatory (2005-880-TJF)

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist  
17845 East Highway 10  
P O Box 800  
Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

We have reviewed information about your project to construct a new 115/12.5 kV substation. The project site is in W ½ of the NW 1/4 Sec.10, T. 120N., R.25 W., Wright County, Minnesota.

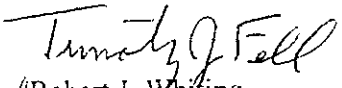
The work proposed at the location stated is not within the regulatory jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers. No work will be done in a navigable water of the United States, and no dredged or fill material, including that incidental to mechanical land clearing, will be discharged in any water of the United States, including wetlands. Therefore, a Department of the Army permit is not required to do this work.

This letter is valid only for the project referenced above. If any change in design, location, or purpose is contemplated, contact this office to avoid doing work that may be in violation of Federal law. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS CONFIRMATION LETTER DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR STATE, LOCAL, OR OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS, SUCH AS THOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES OR COUNTY.

The decision regarding this action is based on information found in the administrative record which documents the District's decision-making process, the basis for the decision, and the final decision.

If you have any questions, contact Tim Fell in our St. Paul office at (651) 290-5360. In any correspondence or inquiries, please refer to the Regulatory number shown above.

Sincerely,

  
for Robert J. Whiting  
Chief, Regulatory Branch

**JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION**  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Revised 8/13/04

DISTRICT OFFICE: St. Paul District  
FILE NUMBER: 2005-880-TJF  
PROJECT LOCATION INFORMATION:

State: Minnesota  
County: Wright  
Center coordinates of site (latitude/longitude): W 1/4 NW 1/4 S 10 120N R25W  
Approximate size of area (parcel) reviewed, including uplands: 1 acres.  
Name of nearest waterway: Lake Constance  
Name of watershed:

**JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION**

Completed: Desktop determination ☒ Date: 15 February 2005  
Site visit(s) ☒ Date(s):

**Jurisdictional Determination (JD):**

☒ Preliminary JD - Based on available information, ☐ there appear to be (or) ☐ there appear to be no "waters of the United States" and/or "navigable waters of the United States" on the project site. A preliminary JD is not appealable (Reference 33 CFR part 331).

☒ Approved JD - An approved JD is an appealable action (Reference 33 CFR part 331).  
Check all that apply:

☒ There are "navigable waters of the United States" (as defined by 33 CFR part 329 and associated guidance) within the reviewed area. Approximate size of jurisdictional area:

☒ There are "waters of the United States" (as defined by 33 CFR part 328 and associated guidance) within the reviewed area. Approximate size of jurisdictional area:

☒ There are "isolated, non-navigable, intra-state waters or wetlands" within the reviewed area.

☒ Decision supported by SWANCC/Migratory Bird Rule Information Sheet for Determination of No Jurisdiction.

**BASIS OF JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION:**

**A. Waters defined under 33 CFR part 329 as "navigable waters of the United States":**

☒ The presence of waters that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and/or are presently used, or have been used in the past, or may be susceptible for use to transport interstate or foreign commerce.

**B. Waters defined under 33 CFR part 328.3(a) as "waters of the United States":**

☒ (1) The presence of waters, which are currently used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide.

☒ (2) The presence of interstate waters including interstate wetlands<sup>1</sup>.

☒ (3) The presence of other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, the use, degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate commerce including any such waters (check all that apply):

☐ (i) which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreational or other purposes.

☐ (ii) from which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce.

☐ (iii) which are or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce.

☒ (4) Impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the US.

☒ (5) The presence of a tributary to a water identified in (1) - (4) above.

☒ (6) The presence of territorial seas.

☒ (7) The presence of wetlands adjacent<sup>2</sup> to other waters of the US, except for those wetlands adjacent to other wetlands.

**Rationale for the Basis of Jurisdictional Determination (applies to any boxes checked above).** *If the jurisdictional water or wetland is not itself a navigable water of the United States, describe connection(s) to the downstream navigable waters. If B(1) or B(3) is used as the Basis of Jurisdiction, document navigability and/or interstate commerce connection (i.e., discuss site conditions, including why the waterbody is navigable and/or how the destruction of the waterbody could affect interstate or foreign commerce). If B(2, 4, 5 or 6) is used as the Basis of Jurisdiction, document the rationale used to make the determination. If B(7) is used as the Basis of Jurisdiction, document the rationale used to make adjacency determination: The project is being done in upland area and there is no impact to Waters of the U. S.*

FILE NUMBER: 2005-880-TJF

Lateral Extent of Jurisdiction: (Reference: 33 CFR parts 328 and 329)

☒ Ordinary High Water Mark indicated by:

- ☐ clear, natural line impressed on the bank
- ☐ the presence of litter and debris
- ☐ changes in the character of soil
- ☐ destruction of terrestrial vegetation
- ☐ shelving
- ☐ other:

☒ High Tide Line indicated by:

- ☐ oil or scum line along shore objects
- ☐ fine shell or debris deposits (foreshore)
- ☐ physical markings/characteristics
- ☐ tidal gages
- ☐ other:

☒ Mean High Water Mark indicated by:

- ☐ survey to available datum; ☐ physical markings; ☐ vegetation lines/changes in vegetation types.

☐ Wetland boundaries, as shown on the attached wetland delineation map and/or in a delineation report prepared by:

**Basis For Not Asserting Jurisdiction:**

☒ The reviewed area consists entirely of uplands.

☒ Unable to confirm the presence of waters in 33 CFR part 328(a)(1, 2, or 4-7).

☒ Headquarters declined to approve jurisdiction on the basis of 33 CFR part 328.3(a)(3).

☒ The Corps has made a case-specific determination that the following waters present on the site are not Waters of the United States:

- ☐ Waste treatment systems, including treatment ponds or lagoons, pursuant to 33 CFR part 328.3.
- ☐ Artificially irrigated areas, which would revert to upland if the irrigation ceased.
- ☐ Artificial lakes and ponds created by excavating and/or diking dry land to collect and retain water and which are used exclusively for such purposes as stock watering, irrigation, settling basins, or rice growing.
- ☐ Artificial reflecting or swimming pools or other small ornamental bodies of water created by excavating and/or diking dry land to retain water for primarily aesthetic reasons.
- ☐ Water-filled depressions created in dry land incidental to construction activity and pits excavated in dry land for the purpose of obtaining fill, sand, or gravel unless and until the construction or excavation operation is abandoned and the resulting body of water meets the definition of waters of the United States found at 33 CFR 328.3(a).
- ☐ Isolated, intrastate wetland with no nexus to interstate commerce.
- ☐ Prior converted cropland, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Explain rationale:
- ☐ Non-tidal drainage or irrigation ditches excavated on dry land. Explain rationale:
- ☐ Other (explain):

**DATA REVIEWED FOR JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION (mark all that apply):**

☒ Maps, plans, plots or plat submitted by or on behalf of the applicant.

☒ Data sheets prepared/submitted by or on behalf of the applicant.

☐ This office concurs with the delineation report, dated \_\_\_\_\_, prepared by (company):

☐ This office does not concur with the delineation report, dated \_\_\_\_\_ prepared by (company):

☒ Data sheets prepared by the Corps.

☒ Corps' navigable waters' studies:

☒ U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologic Atlas:

☒ U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Topographic maps:

☒ U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Historic quadrangles:

☒ U.S. Geological Survey 15 Minute Historic quadrangles:

☒ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey:

☒ National wetlands inventory maps:

☒ State/Local wetland inventory maps:

☒ FEMA/FIRM maps (Map Name & Date):

☒ 100-year Floodplain Elevation is: \_\_\_\_\_ (NGVD)

☒ Aerial Photographs (Name & Date):

☒ Other photographs (Date):

☒ Advanced Identification Wetland maps:

☒ Site visit/determination conducted on:

☒ Applicable/supporting case law:

☒ Other information (please specify):

<sup>1</sup>Wetlands are identified and delineated using the methods and criteria established in the Corps Wetland Delineation Manual (87 Manual) (i.e., occurrence of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils and wetland hydrology).

<sup>2</sup>The term "adjacent" means bordering, contiguous, or neighboring. Wetlands separated from other waters of the U.S. by man-made dikes or barriers, natural river berms, beach dunes, and the like are also adjacent.



**Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER**

---

**From:** Diane Anderson [diane.anderson@dnr.state.mn.us]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 19, 2005 12:27 PM  
**To:** Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER  
**Cc:** Tom Balcom  
**Subject:** Revised Willow 69kV Transmission Line

Hi Carole,

I just received the copy of the letter you sent regarding the Revised Willow 69kV Transmission Line in Hennepin County. The DNR has reviewed the letter and map. This project does not appear to have the potential for any significant environmental effects.

Also, you had sent another letter and map dated December 15, 2004 regarding the proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation in Wright County. The DNR does not have any comments regarding that project - it also does not appear to have the potential for any significant environmental effects.

Thank you for the opportunity to review these projects. Please contact me if you have any questions about these comments.

Diane

\* \* \* \* \*

Diane K. Anderson  
Environmental Planner  
Environmental Policy & Review Unit  
DNR Division of Ecological Services  
651-296-1548

/25/05

## Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

---

**From:** Nick\_Rowse@fws.gov  
**Sent:** Friday, December 17, 2004 4:13 PM  
**To:** Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER  
**Subject:** proposed Lake Constance substation

Dear Carole,

I have reviewed the proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation project and found no federally listed species documented in the project area.

Nick Rowse  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Twin Cities Field Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4101 American Blvd. E.  
Bloomington, MN 55425



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

January 10, 2005

Ms. Carole Schmidt  
Great River Energy  
PO Box 800  
Elk River, MN 55330-0800

RE: Wright-Hennepin Cooperative to build a new Lake Constance Substation  
T120 R25 S10, Wright County  
SHPO Number: 2005-0763

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

Based on available information, we conclude that **no properties** eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places are within the project's area of effect.

Please contact Dennis Gimmestad at (651) 296-5462 if you have any questions regarding our review of this project.

Sincerely,

Britta L. Bloomberg  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

## Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER

---

**From:** Harris Baker [Harris.Baker@dot.state.mn.us]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2005 8:46 AM  
**To:** Schmidt, Carole GRE/ER  
**Subject:** Lake Constance Substation

Carole, the proposed substation won't have any adverse effects on the Buffalo Municipal Airport.

Harris Baker  
Regional Airport Engineer  
Office of Aeronautics  
222 East Plato Blvd  
St. Paul MN 55107-1618  
Phone 651-296-8203  
Fax 651-297-5643



17645 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-2121 • Fax 763-241-2366

15 December 2004

Mr. Tim Fell  
Department of the Army  
Corps of Engineers  
St. Paul District, Attn: CO-R  
190 Fifth Street East  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

RE: Proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation  
Wright County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fell:

On behalf of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electrical Association (W-H), Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment for a new 115/ 12.5 kV substation in Wright County, Minnesota. The substation will be constructed and owned by W-H and is needed to improve reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

Because the substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The proposed substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W near Buffalo, Minnesota. A project fact sheet and a site map are enclosed for your information.

GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on floodplains, wetlands, and other important natural resources that occur in the project area.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, January 14, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Lake Constance\LakeCDOA



17645 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-3121 • Fax 763-241-2366

15 December 2004

Mr. Tom Balcom, Supervisor  
Division of Ecological Services  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

RE: Proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation  
Wright County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Balcom:

On behalf of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electrical Association (W-H), Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) for a new 115/ 12.5 kV substation in Wright County, Minnesota. The substation will be constructed and owned by W-H and is needed improve reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

Because the substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The proposed substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W near Buffalo, Minnesota. A project fact sheet and a site map are enclosed for your information.

GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and other important state natural resources that occur in the project area. There are no Public Waters in the vicinity of the proposed project. The Minnesota Natural Heritage database was reviewed and the project is over one mile from the nearest Center of Highly Sensitive Area and Center of Significant Native Plant Community Area (see attached map).

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, January 14, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@grenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@grenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

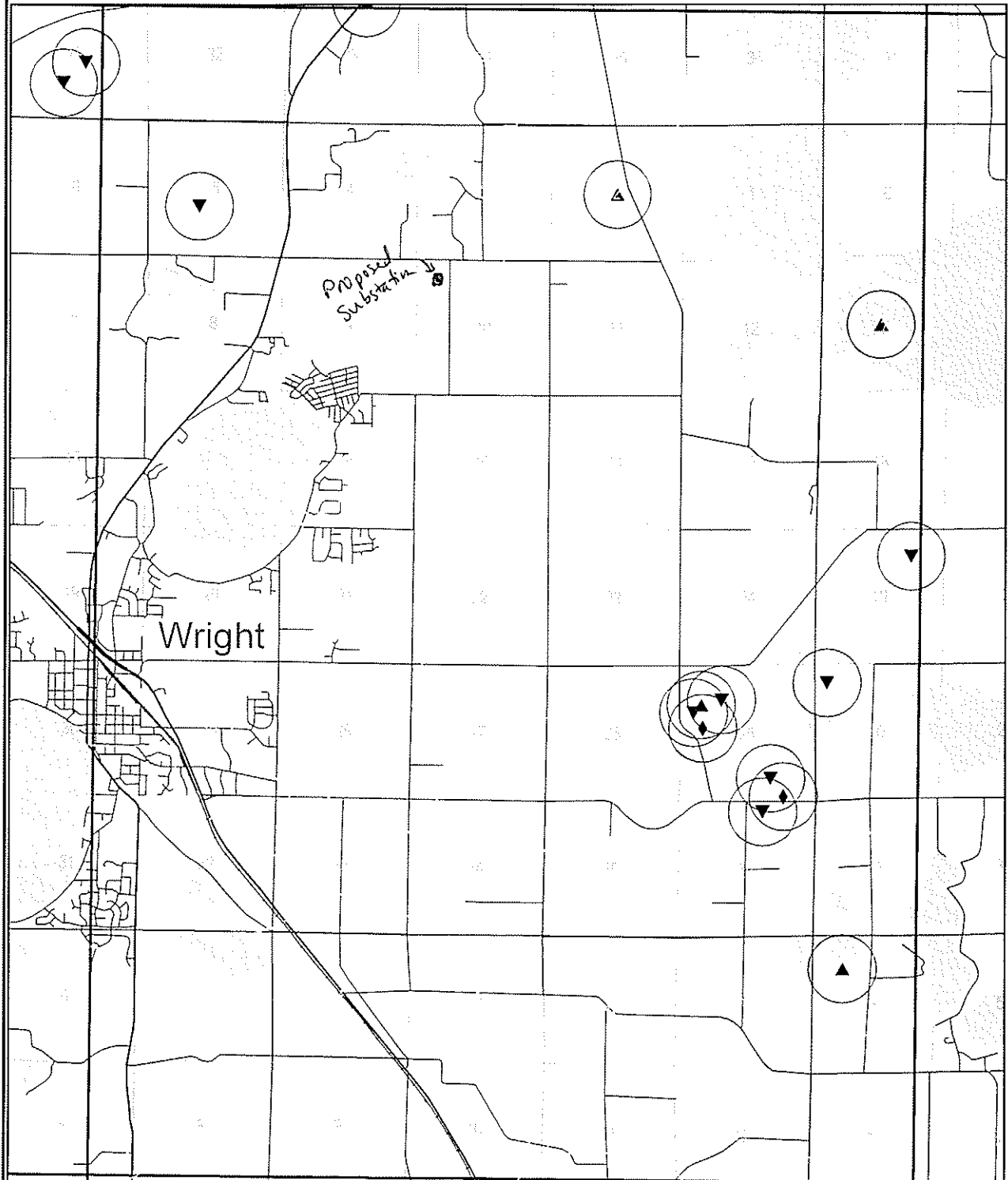
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosures

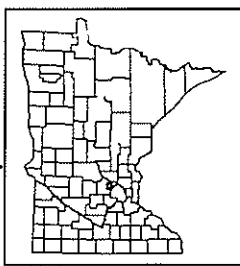
# Sensitive Areas

Buffalo East 1:24,000 U.S.G.S. Quadrangle (DNR Code = R14a)  
Includes portions of Wright County



Map created October 8, 2004

Some features data included here were provided by the Natural Heritage and Heritage Research Program of the Division of Ecological Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and were current as of July 18, 2002. These data are not based on an authoritative inventory of the state. The list of data for any geographic area should not be construed to mean that no significant features are present. In addition, there may be inaccuracies in the data, for which the DNR is not liable and shall not be held responsible for. Permission to use these data does not imply endorsement or approval by the DNR of any interpretation or products derived from the data.



- Center of Highly Sensitive Areas
- Center of Sensitive Plant Areas
- ▲ Center of Sensitive Animal Areas
- Center of Significant Native Plant Community Areas  
non-Minnesota County Biological Survey Counties Only
- ▼ Significant Native Plant Communities  
Identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey
- Buffer Designating Sensitive Areas
- Significant Railroad Prairie Right-of-Way Areas

- Water bodies
- County boundaries
- Township lines
- Section lines
- Quadrangle border
- Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Railroads

**United Services Group**  
GIS Department  
17645 East Highway 10  
Elk River, MN 55330-0341  
(763) 241-3766

UNITED SERVICES GROUP AND GREAT RIVER ENERGY  
MAKE NO WARRANTY AS TO THE ACCURACY OR USABILITY  
OF THE DATA ILLUSTRATED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

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15 December 2004

Mr. Nick Rowse, Habitat Conservation Biologist  
United States Department of the Interior  
Twin Cities Field Office  
4101 East 80th Street  
Bloomington, MN 55425-1665

RE: Proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation  
Wright County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Rowse:

On behalf of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electrical Association (W-H), Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) for a new 115/ 12.5 kV substation in Wright County, Minnesota. The substation will be constructed and owned by W-H and is needed to improve reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

Because the substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The proposed substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W near Buffalo, Minnesota. A project fact sheet and a site map are enclosed for your information.

GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and designated or proposed critical habitat that may be present in the project area. The proposed project does not represent a "major construction activity" as defined in 50 CFR 402.02.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, January 14, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

*Carole L. Schmidt*

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Lake Constance\LakeCFWS





17845 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-3121 • Fax 763-241-2366

15 December 2004

Ms. Britta L. Bloomberg  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Minnesota Historical Society  
345 Kellogg Blvd. West  
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

RE: Proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation  
Wright County, Minnesota

Dear Ms. Bloomberg:

On behalf of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electrical Association (W-H), Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) for a new 115/ 12.5 kV substation in Wright County, Minnesota. The substation will be constructed and owned by W-H and is needed to improve reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

Because the substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The proposed substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W near Buffalo, Minnesota. A project fact sheet and a site map are enclosed for your information.

GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on historic properties in the project area.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, January 14, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Lake Constance\LakeCMHS





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15 December 2004

Ms. Kathy Vesely  
Office of Aeronautics  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
222 E. Plato Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55107-1618

RE: Proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation  
Wright County, Minnesota

Dear Ms. Vesely:

On behalf of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electrical Association (W-H), Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) for a new 115/ 12.5 kV substation in Wright County, Minnesota. The substation will be constructed and owned by W-H and is needed to improve reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

Because the substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The proposed substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W near Buffalo, Minnesota. A project fact sheet and a site map are enclosed for your information.

GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on airports or airstrips in the project area.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, January 14, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@grenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@grenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Lake Constance\LakeCMnDOT



17445 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 600 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0600 • Tel: 763-241-2121 • Fax: 763-241-2366

15 December 2004

Mr. George Morris, District Conservationist  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Buffalo Field Office  
306C Brighton Avenue  
Buffalo, MN 55313-1725

RE: Proposed Lake Constance 115/12.5 kV Substation  
Wright County, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Morris:

On behalf of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electrical Association (W-H), Great River Energy (GRE) is in the process of preparing an environmental assessment (and an Environmental Report for the Rural Utilities Service) for a new 115/ 12.5 kV substation in Wright County, Minnesota. The substation will be constructed and owned by W-H and is needed to improve reliability and to meet growing electrical needs in the area.

Because the substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line, no new transmission lines will be needed for this project.

The proposed substation will be located in Section 10, T120N, R25W near Buffalo, Minnesota. A project fact sheet and a site map are enclosed for your information.

GRE is requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on important or prime farmlands in the project area.

We would appreciate receiving any written comments from your office by Friday, January 14, 2005. If you have any questions about this proposed project, please contact me at (763) 241-2272. If you wish to respond by e-mail, my address is [cschmidt@greenergy.com](mailto:cschmidt@greenergy.com). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Carole L. Schmidt  
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure

h:\cschmidt\Lake Constance\LakeCNCRS

# Lake Constance 115 kV Substation



**WRIGHT-HENNEPIN COOPERATIVE  
ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION**  
6800 Electric Drive  
Rockford, MN 55373-0330  
763-477-3000



**Touchstone Energy®**  
*The power of human connections*



**GREAT RIVER ENERGY**  
17845 East Hwy 10 P.O. Box 800  
Elk River, MN 55330-0800  
1-763-441-3121  
[www.greatriverenergy.com](http://www.greatriverenergy.com)

## Project Goal and Need

Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (W-H) will construct and own a new 115 kV electrical substation east of Buffalo, Minnesota. Great River Energy is a generation and transmission cooperative that provides electrical power to W-H and 27 other distribution cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Great River Energy's role in this project will be to assist Wright County and W-H through the permitting process. The substation facility is necessary to meet the growing electrical demand in the area. W-H's Mary Lake and Black Lake substations currently serve this area; however, each is approaching its full capacity. This substation will be used to serve the load in and around the City of Buffalo.

## Substation

W-H will acquire the land, build and own the new substation on a one-acre site located on the west side of Dalton Avenue NE, ¼ mile south of County Road 113 (see map on back). The substation will be constructed directly under an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line. It will contain a 115/12.47 kV distribution transformer (see photo). The entire substation will be fenced.

## Transmission Line

No new transmission line is needed for this project. The existing 115 kV transmission line owned and operated by Xcel Energy will enter the substation on one side and exit the other. The in-and-out design will require new wood poles on either side of the substation. The new wood poles will be in the general location of the existing poles.

## Schedule

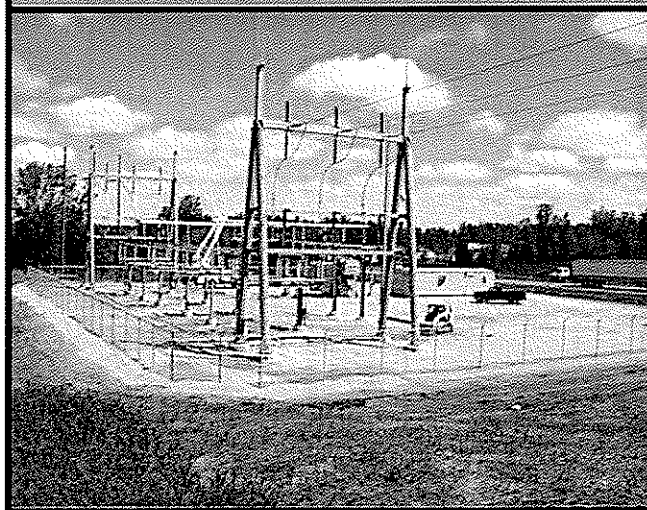
Wright County will be the permitting authority for this project. W-H has submitted an application for a conditional use permit. Landowners will be notified of the public hearing dates in accordance with County requirements. This project also requires a completion of an Environmental Assessment. Construction is scheduled to start in spring 2005 and be completed by fall of 2005.

## Contacts

Wayne Bauernschmitt  
Wright-Hennepin Cooperative  
Electric Association  
763-477-3095  
Email: [wbauernschmitt@whe.org](mailto:wbauernschmitt@whe.org)

Dale Aukee  
Great River Energy  
763-241-2229 or  
1-800-442-3013  
Email: [daukee@GREnergy.com](mailto:daukee@GREnergy.com)

**Typical Distribution Substation**



## **APPENDIX B**

### **EQB CORRESPONDENCE LEGAL NOTICES**



**received**

*Feb 9, 2005*

*C: Gary*

658 Cedar Street  
Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 5155

(651)297-1257  
Fax (651)296-3698  
TTY: (800)627-3529  
[www.eqb.state.mn.us](http://www.eqb.state.mn.us)

February 4, 2005

Mr. Charles Davis  
Environmental Health Officer  
Wright County  
10 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW  
Buffalo, MN 55313-1188

Mr. Dale Aukee  
Field Representative  
Great River Energy  
17845 East Highway 10  
P.O. Box 800  
Eik River, MN 55530-0800

RE: Lake Constance 115 kV Substation

Dear Sirs;

This letter confirms that the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board has received notification that Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association proposes to construct a 115 kV substation in Buffalo Township in Wright County.

This project falls under the Power Plant Siting Act, Minnesota Statutes § 116C.51-.69, and Minnesota Rules chapter 4400, which, for most transmission line projects over 100 kV, requires a permit from the EQB. Minn. Stat. § 116C.61 subd.1 provides that the EQB permit supersedes and preempts all zoning, building, or land use rules, regulations, or ordinances promulgated by regional, county, local, and special purpose government. However, for eligible projects, a utility may apply to those local units of government that have jurisdiction over the route for approval to build the project instead of applying to the EQB. The proposed 115 kV transmission line and substation project is eligible for local review. [Minn. Stat. § 116C.576 and Minn. R. part 4400.5000 subp. 2 C]

Great River Energy (GRE) has indicated that Wright County is the local unit of government with jurisdiction in permitting the project and that a Conditional Use Permit application was submitted to the Wright County on January 21, 2005. A local unit of government may relinquish its jurisdiction by requesting the EQB to assume jurisdiction within 60 days of the filing of an application with the local unit of government. [Minn. R. 4400.5000 subp. 4]

An environmental assessment must be prepared by the local unit of government with jurisdiction over the project. The EQB acknowledge that Wright County is the RGU for the Lake Constance 115 kV Substation Project.

Specific requirements with regard to the environmental review process include an opportunity for the public to participate in the development of the scope of the environmental assessment

before it is prepared; notice published in the EQB Monitor of when the assessment is available for review and of the procedure for commenting on the assessment; and that the final decision on the project will not be made until at least ten days after the notice appears in the EQB Monitor. Wright County must provide a copy of the environmental assessment to the EQB when it is completed. [Minn. R. 4400.5000 subp. 5]

Also note that GRE/Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association is required to send notice to those persons on the EQB power plant siting general notification list that a permit has been applied for from the local unit of government. [Minn. R. 4400.5000 subp. 3] The EQB can supply that list by electronic file to GRE/Wright-Hennepin CEA upon request.

If there are any other questions, please feel free to contact me by phone or email.

Sincerely,



William Cole Storm, Staff  
MN Environmental Quality Board  
300 Centennial Office Building  
658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(P) 651-296-2878  
(F) 651-296-3698  
[bill.storm@state.mn.us](mailto:bill.storm@state.mn.us)



GREAT RIVER  
ENERGY

17845 East Highway 10 • P.O. Box 800 • Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800 • 763-441-3121 • Fax 763-241-2366

January 31, 2005

WO #39031

Mr. Robert Schroeder, Chair  
MN Environmental Quality Board  
658 Cedar St., RM 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155

SUBJECT: Lake Constance 115 kV Substation

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

In accordance with the Power Plant Siting Act, this letter serves as the required notice to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Chair that Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (W-H) has elected to seek local approval for the construction of a new 115 kV substation. Great River Energy (wholesale power supplier to W-H) will assist W-H and Wright County with the permitting process. A Conditional Use Permit application was delivered to Wright County on January 21, 2005. Wright County has been informed that they have 60 days to refer the permitting process to the EQB.

The proposed substation would be located in Buffalo Township near the City of Buffalo completely within Wright County. The new facility will meet the growing electrical demand and improve the service and reliability of electric facilities in the area. A fact sheet that provides more detail on the project is enclosed.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to Charles Davis, Environmental Health Officer for Wright County at 763-682-7331. I may be reached at 763-241-2229. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Dale Aukee  
Field Representative

Enclosure

CC: EQB General List of Interested Persons – w/encl.  
Tony Nelson, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association– w/encl.  
Wayne Bauernschmitt, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association – w/encl.  
Charles Davis, Wright County, w/encl.

DA:jh\subs\lakeconstance\eqblocalreviewitr.doc

Direct Dial (763) 241-2229

E-Mail [daukee@grenergy.com](mailto:daukee@grenergy.com)

FAX (763) 241-6003

[www.GreatRiverEnergy.com](http://www.GreatRiverEnergy.com)

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



# Lake Constance 115 kV Substation



WRIGHT-HENNEPIN COOPERATIVE  
ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION  
6800 Electric Drive  
Rockford, MN 55373-0330  
763-477-3000



Touchstone Energy®  
*The power of human connections*



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17845 East Hwy 10 P.O. Box 800  
Elk River, MN 55330-0800  
1-763-441-3121  
[www.greatriverenergy.com](http://www.greatriverenergy.com)

## Project Goal and Need

Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (W-H) will construct and own a new 115 kV electrical substation east of Buffalo, Minnesota. Great River Energy is a generation and transmission cooperative that provides electrical power to W-H and 27 other distribution cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Great River Energy's role in this project will be to assist Wright County and W-H through the permitting process. The substation facility is necessary to meet the growing electrical demand in the area. W-H's Mary Lake and Black Lake substations currently serve this area; however, each is approaching its full capacity. This substation will be used to serve the load in and around the City of Buffalo.

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## Transmission Line

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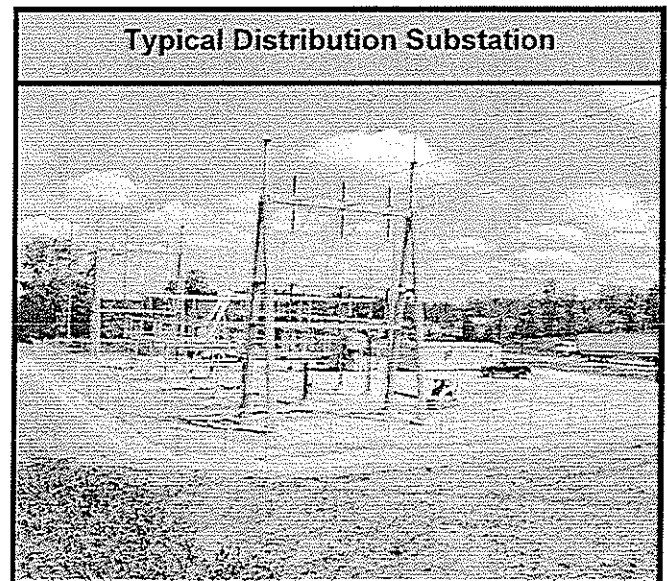
## Schedule

Wright County will be the permitting authority for this project. W-H has submitted an application for a conditional use permit. Landowners will be notified of the public hearing dates in accordance with County requirements. This project also requires a completion of an Environmental Assessment. Construction is scheduled to start in spring 2005 and be completed by fall of 2005.

## Contacts

Wayne Bauernschmitt  
Wright-Hennepin Cooperative  
Electric Association  
763-477-3095  
Email: [wbauernschmitt@whe.org](mailto:wbauernschmitt@whe.org)

Dale Aukee  
Great River Energy  
763-241-2229 or  
1-800-442-3013  
Email: [daukee@GREnergy.com](mailto:daukee@GREnergy.com)



## Public Comment Notice

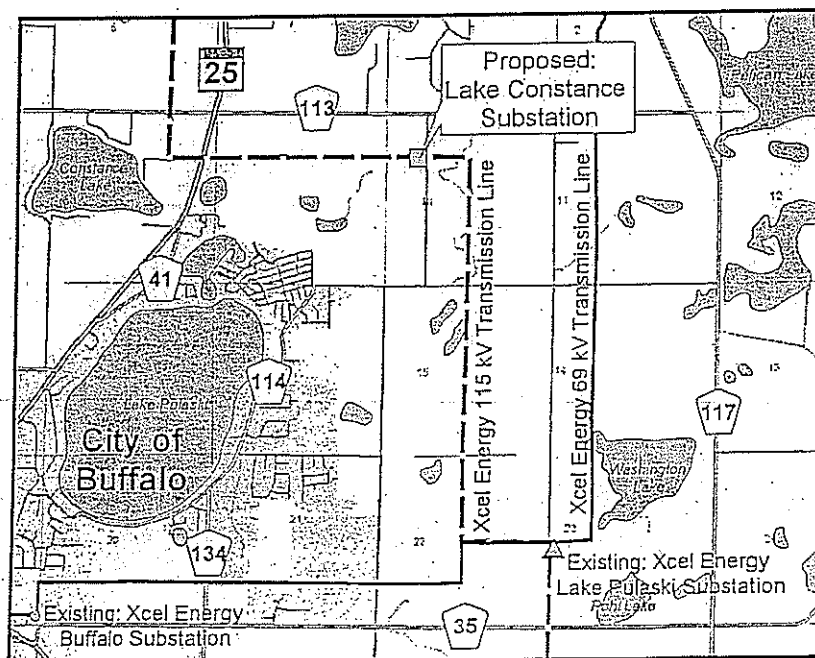
### Subject: Environmental Assessment of the Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association 115 kV Substation

To meet increasing electrical demand and insure reliable electrical service, Wright - Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association proposes to construct a new 115 kV electrical substation directly beneath an existing Xcel Energy 115 kV transmission line in Buffalo Township, Wright County.

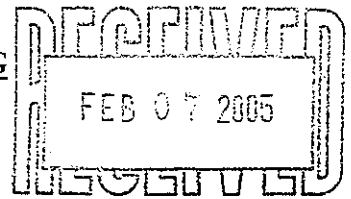
As required by the State of Minnesota Power Plant Siting Act, an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the project must be completed. The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board has designated Wright County as the local unit of government responsible for preparing the EA and permitting the project.

Wright County invites the public to participate in the environmental process. The purpose of this notice is to solicit public comment and input on environmental issues associated with the project.

If you would like to comment or suggest a specific topic to be addressed in the final EA report, please submit them in writing to the Wright County Planning and Zoning Department by **February 14, 2005**. An outline of topics to be covered is available for review at the Wright County Planning and Zoning Office, 10 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, Buffalo, MN 55313-1185 or by calling (763-682-7338).



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that on Thursday, February 17, 2005 the Wright County Planning Commission will hold a hearing in Room 120- Community Room of the Courthouse Annex, in the City of Buffalo, Minnesota at 8:00 p.m. to consider the following item:

WRIGHT HENNEPIN ELECTRIC

LOCATION: Part of the W 1/2 of NW 1/4, Section 10, Township 120, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota.  
(Buffalo Twp.) Tax #202-000-102300 Property owner: Elletson

Petitions for a Conditional Use Permit for location of an electric distribution substation and division of one acre for said purpose as regulated in Section 604 of the Wright County Zoning Ordinance.

Such persons that desire to be heard with reference to the proposed application will be heard at this time. If you do not attend the hearing or submit written comment, it will be assumed that you have no objections to the proposal. If there are any questions, please contact the Planning and Zoning Office in Buffalo. Interpreter services for the hearing impaired will be provided on request for public meetings and other county-sponsored classes and events.

WRIGHT COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING OFFICE  
WRIGHT COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
102nd STREET NW RM 140  
BUFFALO MINNESOTA 55313-1185  
PHONE: (763) 682-7338